

1508/449  
**CONSIDERATIONS**

On the present

**DANGEROUS CRISIS.**



---

**EDINBURGH:**

Printed in the Year M,DCC,LXIII,

CONSTITUTIONS



DANIEL ROUSSEAU

...the great, ... the interest of the ... and ... connect with ... and ... is ... Ambition ... is ever ... and false ... hopes and fears of the credulous ... the instruments with which ambition ... way to greatness. And, when its ... this reached the summit of their ... after ... of ... and ...

---

# CONSIDERATIONS

On the present

## DANGEROUS CRISIS.

**C**OULD the present divisions among the great, be considered solely with a view to the interest of the contending parties, a dispassionate and disinterested spectator might view the contest with indifference ; and smile at the littleness of ambition, which, to attain a precarious and short-lived pre-eminence, can stoop to such ignoble practices, as debase a character for ever.

Ambition, which creates to itself imaginary wants, is ever industrious to excite vain hopes, and raise false terrors, among the public. The hopes and fears of the credulous multitude, are the instruments with which ambition works its way to greatness: And, when its votaries have thus reached the summit of their wishes, did they but know how little they appear in the eye of manly sense and sober reason, they would blush at their elevation.

With



With whatever specious pretences the art of party may veil its ambitious designs, experience abundantly evinces, that interest and resentment are the ruling motives which actuate the competitors. However they pretend to differ in principle, yet, when in power, they agree in pursuing the same corrupt and ruinous measures. We may learn from the recent example of *two learned bodies*, that they can even change their style with their fortunes; and that the one can, with wonderful facility, adopt the language of the other. As parties therefore, they would not be worth a moment's attention, did they not obstruct and injure public welfare, by their mutual struggles to mount the airy pinnacle of promotion.

Nevertheless, when we reflect how much the nation suffers, how much the crown is distressed, by their fatal altercations, then we can no longer remain unconcerned spectators; nor neglect that duty, to which our amiable Sovereign has condescended to invite every *honest man*.

At the close of a glorious and successful war, who did not hope that the government would be studious to cultivate the blessings of peace? That they would endeavour to alleviate the heavy burthens which oppress the public; to improve the police of the Kingdom; and promote the prosperity of the people? Who did not hope, under the auspices of a young, virtuous, and benevolent monarch, to see *constitutional liberty* triumph





triumph over corruption, and subdue an usurpation, which has too long invaded the prerogatives of the crown, and the rights of the kingdom?—Which has intercepted all due communication between the King and his people, and transferred the respect and attention of the subject, from the Sovereign to his minister?

But how greatly are we fallen from our expectations! Instead of planning schemes of *public* œconomy; instead of providing for the purposes of domestic improvement; instead of emerging from the dark and filthy vale of venality, and climbing the heights of freedom and virtue; we are still groveling in the same foul and devious tracts; And the hours of peace have been shamefully mispent, in the mere routine of business, the bustle of intrigue, and the confusion of party discord.

Truth however compells me to acknowledge, that one attempt has been made towards public good, which was calculated to rescue the subject from the most cruel of all confinements, and the most lamentable of all oppressions. Unhappily however, the care of preparing a remedy for this most shocking grievance, was entrusted to a bold, florid, specious, temporizing, ambitious, pliant, vain, versatile genius; who thinks great abilities are given only for the benefit of the owner---One, who without being convinced himself, has the talent of persuading others; who, like *Carneades*, is always prepared to confute his own arguments---One, who can sport with the sensibility of his hearers,

hearers, and with mechanic mastery, can shed tears at his own ingenious fictions---One, who amidst the tumult of conflicting parties, yet hesitated on which side to throw the weight of his excelling talents; and who consequently was not at leisure to encounter difficulties, whereby he would reap no honour or advantage, but that of being the instrument of public good.

This imperfect effort excepted, no expedient for the general welfare has been even proposed: Nay, since the conclusion of peace, domestic evils have multiplied. No provision has been made for the support or employment of those intrepid fellows, to whose bravery we are chiefly indebted for all our triumphs. They are suffered to roam abroad to the terror of their fellow subjects, and to commit acts of violence and rapine in the broad face of day, as if there was no civil government in Britain, but all was anarchy and uproar.

To whom shall we impute this scandalous remissness, this seemingly wilful inattention? No one is so unjust, no one is so ungrateful, as to doubt the patriotic disposition of the most truly gracious Prince, that ever filled the British throne---No *candid* man neither is so ungenerous, as to doubt the *disposition* of the late minister, to aid the noble and public-spirited intentions of his benign master.

To judge impartially between Lord *Bute* and his opponents, I will recur to the first dawning of his administration. From the time that Mr. *Pitt* thought

thought proper to resign the seals, because he alone was not *permitted to guide* like an absolute dictator, Lord *Bute* was supposed to hold the first place in his Majesty's councils. His Lordship, though not unknown to the polite and learned circle, was an utter stranger in the political world. The expectations which one party formed in his favour, could only be equalled by the prejudices entertained by its opposite.

Unhappily however for his Sovereign, for the nation, and for himself, he has proved that he has not all the requisites necessary to stem the tide of opposition. He no sooner stepped into the cabinet, than he shewed himself too secure in his royal master's affections, and too confident in the consciousness of his own integrity. He excited envy, by his rapid and imprudent progress to seize the helm of state; and he provoked resentment, by treating some of the foremost men in the nation, with ungracious reserve and supercilious indifference.

In some instances he seems to have displayed the mere wantonness of power. The circumstance of changing the colour of his ribbon, was a parade highly impolitic. It tended to enflame the invidious, already too much exasperated, without securing to his master or himself, any solid advantage whatever.

Nevertheless the opening of his administration was not without some favourable omens. He generously assisted the laudable propensity of his  
Sove-



Sovereign, to befriend literature, and encourage arts and sciences: Genius began to rear its head, and to start from that obscurity, wherein it had long pined for want of patronage. But however generosity may have been displayed in acts of munificence, we cannot say that judgment and impartiality were always exhibited in the selection of proper objects.

It must be confessed that his Lordship's predilection for his northern compatriots, though not so extravagant as the malice of his enemies would insinuate, was nevertheless discovered in instances too glaring to be suppressed, and too frequently repeated to be forgotten. Though this natural bias might be justified, and perhaps applauded, in Lord *Bute*, yet it admits of no excuse or palliation in the statesman.

Neither can his Lordship's warmest advocates justify his conduct, in assuming the unconstitutional and ever odious power of prime minister; and endeavouring to bar all the avenues to the royal closet, against those who were too spirited to solicit, or too much disliked to obtain, the favour of his passport. This favoured more of the narrow policy of a favourite, than of the liberal plan of a patriot.

From the same contracted principle, he confined himself within a narrow circle of dependents, who were interested to conceal some truths, and too obsequious to create him the inquietude of hearing others. Thus environed, he became  
diff-

difficult of access ; and what is worse, some who had the honour of being admitted to his presence, were treated with all the mortifying austerity of stubborn virtue.

Such was the inflexibility of his nature, that, even in public, he could not command those little arts, which are often of greater use to a statesman, than more excellent endowments : His speeches in a certain assembly, do more credit to his eloquence, than to his discretion. He spoke with all the manly firmness and intrepidity which a warm heart inspires, when conscious of its own rectitude : But he could not suppress several indiscreet sentiments of disdain and defiance, which shewed the delicacy of a feeling mind, too sensibly affected by ungenerous and selfish opposition. His Lordship delivered himself *fortiter in re*, but he forgot that a statesman should express himself *suaviter in modo*.

Was it prudent, in the face of the public, to make light of popularity ? Could he suppose that, in a free kingdom, a minister could long support himself, without some degree of popular favour ? Did he not know, that such is the obstinacy and prejudice of the multitude, that they will ungratefully reject the choicest benefits, when they have been taught to dislike the benefactor ? Could he be ignorant, that an unpopular minister must soon make an unpopular—— ? Would it not pain his honest mind, to be the instrument of lessening the public affection towards the Sovereign he served, towards the Prince he loves ?

To what purpose do the purest intentions of a minister avail, unless he has abilities and will to pursue the means proper to attain the noble ends which he has in prospect? Candor, truth, honor, fortitude, frankness, sincerity and justice, will not sustain the power of a statesman, unless these virtues are tempered with good humour, patience, moderation, affability, complacency, forbearance and equanimity. Great and virtuous endowments will secure the favour of the good and wise; but inferior and superficial talents are occasionally necessary to counteract malice, and amuse futility.

Of all the indiscretions, however, which are to be imputed to his Lordship, that of leaguings with a hardy veteran, long hackneyed in the ways of corruption, was the most fatal and the most inexcusable. By this imprudent association, he, in some measure, put it out of his power to do the good he meditated. He might have been sensible, that such a colleague could gain him no confidence with the public; that the interest created by his well-known mode of influence, was not only incompatible with his Lordship's avowed intentions, but that, in the hour of need, it would desert him, as it had abandoned his predecessor. If he had not intended to remedy the abuses of former administrations, he should not have accepted the high office he filled: As he proposed to redress them, nothing could be more preposterous than to unite with the very man, who principally contributed to extend, and dared  
openly



openly to avow, that corrupt system, which his Lordship professed to reform.

But if Lord *Bute* has been precipitate and indiscreet, the party who have opposed him, have been malicious and unjust. The acts of his administration which they have most loudly impeached, are the *treaty of peace*, and the imposition of additional duties on *Cyder*, &c. And when these are candidly considered, there will not appear to be any reasonable foundation for such violent clamour as has been raised against them.

With regard to the peace, all intelligent and moderate men concur in acknowledging, that it is the most honourable and profitable for this kingdom, and the most disadvantageous and humiliating to our enemies, of any that ever was concluded between the two nations? Even the great Demagogue, after a tedious, heavy, critical, equivocal, assenting, dissenting, adulatory, vituperatory, evasive, and inconclusive harangue, was forced to admit, that the terms were better than had been offered to himself.

To destroy the merit of this improvement, it was said, that we had made fresh acquisitions since. True: And to counterbalance those acquisitions, we were oppressed with an additional war, an immense additional debt, and increasing difficulties. What Prince, who had an affection for his people, would refuse reasonable terms of accommodation, and risk the *blood and treasure* of

of his subjects, upon the uncertain contingency of obtaining greater advantages, at so dear a rate? What minister, who had the interest of his King and country at heart, would give such council to his Sovereign?

With respect to the Cyder bill, it must be acknowledged that it was precipitate, impolitic, and inadequate to the services proposed. Several taxes might have been devised, which would have been more effectual; scarce any could have been thought of, which would have been more unpopular. Does any sensible and impartial man however imagine, that it is big with all the mischiefs which are imputed to it by the malice of party?

The noble Lord, who strengthened his arguments, by reading the preamble to the bill for repealing the *hearth-money*, passed in the time of our great deliverer, would have done well to have recurred to an act passed in the same glorious reign\*, which laid the duties of 4s. per hogthead on Cyder and Perry. Upon comparing it with former acts, his Lordship might have found that even at this time, when the principles of liberty were so well understood, and in some instances so gloriously and happily asserted, in others it was as little regarded.

By the first act which laid a tax on Cyder and Perry, which was in the twelfth of Charles the second, the duty was to be paid by the *Retailer*,  
and

\* The 13 William III. for granting an aid to his Majesty by laying duties on Malt, Mum, Cyder and Perry.

and this was understood to fall on those who kept public houses. But the act of William the third, intrenches farther on the liberty of the subject, for it renders every honest farmer, every gentleman of small fortune, in short, every private house-holder who buys fruit to *make* Cyder for sale, and there are many such in the Cyder counties, liable to the visitation of the excise officers.

Where then is the new encroachment on liberty?—Where is the additional badge of servitude, in the act lately passed? All the difference is, that in the former the duty is payable by the maker from bought fruit, and in the latter it is payable by the maker general. And even this is no new method of taxation, for the duty on Mead and other liquors, is, by several acts, made payable by the maker generally. But it is said farther, that they who make Cyder for private consumption, are laid open to the inspection of an exciseman. I deny it. The act has scrupulously provided an easy method for their accommodation, and they are expressly exempted from the survey or search of the excise officers, upon the payment of 5s. per head *per annum* by way of composition: A duty not equivalent to the tax on small beer.

Partiality and prejudice would nevertheless persuade us, that the obliging persons to compound for the private consumption of any commodity, is a dangerous innovation, and an unprecedented



precedented attack on freedom: Whereas, in fact, no provision is more common. We find the same clause, with regard to the malt made for private consumption in the act of William the third, already mentioned: Indeed innumerable instances might be produced of these compounding clauses, but I purposely confine myself to that of William the third, as it passed in the reign, to which these champions for liberty refer us for the pattern of legislation.

Whatever objections therefore may be made to the quantum of these duties, there is no reasonable ground for the violent clamour which has been made against the mode of collection. Unless it can be proved that Cyder-makers have a right to enjoy more liberty, than the makers of other liquors.

Let no one imagine however, that I am an advocate for excise laws: On the contrary, I am convinced that they are *all*, in some degree, injurious to the principles of liberty. I am persuaded that the arbitrary method of collecting the duties, and the summary jurisdiction of determining disputes without appeal, is often the occasion of extreme grievance and oppression to the subject, especially in the country, where justices of the peace have the same power as the commissioners have in London.

I well know that in the time of Charles the second, when it was in agitation to settle the excise revenue on his Majesty, in lieu of the perquisites

quisites of the court of wards and liveries, and other feudal profits, the patriots of those days vigorously opposed the exchange, on the foundation of the excise duties being injurious to liberty. Even they who supported the motion, owned the force of the objection, and were ingenuous enough to acknowledge, that they only contended for the excise revenue, as the *lesser evil* of the two.

The man who could contrive some less exceptionable way of raising the revenue, would do a real service to his country, but this is no more exceptionable than the method of collecting *custom-house duties* in many cases: Till some better expedient is devised, there is no room to say that it is any dangerous innovation to raise a tax on one liquor, by the same methods it is collected on another\*.

That the cry of "liberty and property and no excise," should inflame the multitude, is by no means matter of surprize; but that it should produce the extraordinary address which was successively made to the three branches of the legislature, is not a little astonishing. No man

\* I am aware that Mr. *Mun*, Sir *Josiah Child*, Sir *Walter Raleigh*, and other eminent writers, have contended that the method of raising duties by an *excise*, is preferable to that of collecting them by the *customs*: But their arguments rather apply to the point of national profit, than of national freedom. It would be difficult however, if not impossible, to suggest any mode of taxation, which, without the help of much ingenuity, might not be proved in some degree prejudicial to liberty.

man can entertain a higher regard for the trading interest in general, and for that very respectable body the *City of London* in particular, than myself. At the same time, I am sensible that the resolutions of that body, as well as of other bodies, are often dictated by the influence of one or a few, perhaps provoked by resentment, misled by misinformation, or biassed by party.

That it is a right, and a necessary right, of the subject to petition the King, no friend to his country will attempt to dispute. But the more valuable this privilege is, with the greater caution and reserve it should be exercised. No corporate body can have any just pretence of interfering with the business of legislation, unless where the interest of their corporation in particular, or of the nation in general, is prejudiced or endangered.

It would have been highly injurious to the dignity of the crown, to have preferred the petition of a *single* corporation, not immediately or scarce remotely affected, to the sense of both Lords and Commons; especially as the bill passed through the latter without a division, and without any application from the counties aggrieved or supposed to be aggrieved.

It does not become the wisdom of so considerable a body as the city of London to act with precipitation: For precipitation is the parent of indiscretion and inconsistency. We all remember that, on a former occasion, they made a powerful opposition against the excise scheme: We all remember



remember likewise, that they afterwards in part requested, what they had before so resolutely decried.

When the opposers of the act exclaim against it as an extension of the excise laws, they speak equivocally and maliciously. They would insinuate that some new powers and authorities are given to excisemen, which render the collection of *excise duties* more grievous and intolerable. Whereas it only applies the long-accustomed method of collecting the duties on other liquors, to the collecting of the new duty upon Cyder; and nothing can be more false, fallacious, and unjust, than the constructions which the party in opposition have put upon this act: Though doubtless it was highly impolitic and inexpedient, to impose a tax which must be collected by such odious, though accustomed, methods.

Such, upon a general and short review, has been the tenor of the late well-intentioned but indiscreet administration.—An administration, throughout which it is difficult to determine, whether his Lordship suffered most from his own imprudence, from the malice of his enemies, or the intemperate zeal of his friends.

I will now proceed to examine the conduct of the Opposition; if a little cabal, or junto, may be called by that name. At the head of these, who is not sorry to see one, who claims public respect, at the same time that he deserves public censure—One, whose jealousy can endure no  
C competitor;

competitor; and whose haughtiness of soul can bear no equal--One, who is rather ambitious to attract admirers, than to conciliate friends--One, who had rather be the idol of the mob, than the favourite of the judicious--One, who had rather the nation should suffer, than not be served by him--One, in short, whom we both envy and commiserate?

How could *his* pride, how could *his* boasted virtue, stoop so low, as to confederate with men whom he despises, or once affected to despise?--With men, of whom he emphatically said, that "God and the nation would never forgive them?"---How could *he* so far degrade his character, as to suffer his name to be enrolled among a list of epicures, who have no other merit to display before the public, than that they--EAT?

Is this becoming the dignity of a great mind?—Or, can he suppose, that dignity consists in a certain hardness of nature, which can brave all censure: which can shift parties, vary measures, and, with steady and unembarrassed effrontery, justify every change and tergiversation?--Can he imagine that the pomp of declamation can supply the place of true magnanimity?—Does he not know, that to silence men by a torrent of words, is less noble than to satisfy them by rectitude of action?—Can he be ignorant, that true dignity is displayed in elevation of sentiment, supported by *consistency* of conduct?—

That

That this alone can give that superiority, which neither fortune can purchase, nor titles confer — And that this alone, can make him, what he aspires to be, *uno minor Jove*?

But while I am warm against the defects, let me not be thought unjust to the merits, of his character. As his powerful influence renders the former more dangerous, so the means by which he acquired that influence, have made the latter more conspicuous. He came, or rather rushed into power, at a time when the preceeding ministry were timid and embarrassed; rendered desperate by their own mismanagement, and odious by his spirited opposition. Under such circumstances, unanimity was rather the result of necessity, than choice.

I will not however adopt the invidious arguments which his enemies have urged to his disadvantage. I will not say, that his success was too dearly purchased; and that it was owing as much to accident, as design: If we criticize thus minutely, we shall destroy the merit of all ministerial super-intendence. Certain it is, that the nation has high obligations to his services; he introduced a spirit and activity into our councils, which were diffused throughout every department; his application to business, especially considering the shattered frame of his constitution, was incredible; his integrity in office was incorruptible. Envy must admire the virtues of his early administration; though candour must  
lament,



lament, that in the wane of his ministry, he deviated from those principles, which gained him the confidence of the people.

The grateful public however have acknowledged his services, his gracious Sovereign has rewarded them. But the greatest services may be cancelled by subsequent misconduct; the brightest talents may be tarnished by an overweening arrogance, and insolent presumption. Pride and resentment may seduce the man, whom avarice could not corrupt: And it is indifferent to the nation, by what passion, the principles of public virtue are perverted.

I will venture to establish this leading principle, that they who enlist under the banner of party, and discriminate themselves by the odious distinctions of *Whig* or *Tory*, never mean honestly. There cannot be a more convincing proof that the opposition to the late minister was founded on private and personal views, than its having been opened before he had taken a single measure to justify either censure or approbation.

The advocates of the party, knew that their business was not to reason, but to revile; not to convince, but to mislead; not to inform, but to inflame. To effect these ends, little knowledge is requisite, and still less judgment. As such address themselves to readers who avoid the trouble of thinking, they need no higher talents than are necessary to make folly titter, or malignance grin.

These

These are the triumphs of a lively fancy, and depraved judgment: And, however these little triumphs may flatter mistaken vanity, or serve the views of sordid interest, they will have reason to mourn the mis-application of their talents, when late experience has convinced them, that even they who applauded the writer, concur in detesting the man. No merit whatever can atone for the want of candour and integrity; noble requisites, in which the advocates of the junto, have proved themselves shamefully deficient.

They condemned the peace, before they were acquainted with a single article of the treaty; and when the articles were published, they endeavoured to prejudice the inconsiderate against them, by all the artful malice of invidious misconstruction and mis-representation. From the same principle, they raised a clamour against the Cyder bill, and by false suggestions malevolently propagated erroneous notions with regard to the act, among the people\*.

Had there however been any pretence for their insinuations, yet with what countenance could they step forth, as the champions of freedom, under whose administration, the firm basis of liberty was undermined by slow and secret approaches

\* Among other false suggestions, they asserted that an excise-man had a right to enter any house in the night-time, whereas the act expressly confines their right of entry to the day-time. They affirmed likewise that no one could lend their utensils; with other glaring falsehoods.

proaches--Under whose administration, a heavy duty was imposed upon *advertisements*, &c. A duty, which has a certain, though indirect tendency, to check the free circulation of political truths, and to restrain the freedom of the press; which, however grossly it has been lately abused, is nevertheless one of the best and firmest securities, for the preservation of our rights and privileges.

With what pretence likewise, could they clamour in behalf of liberty, under whose administration a grievous and oppressive tax was laid on the industrious and laborious part of the nation, by which the price of one article of consumption was advanced a *seventh*?--A tax cruelly wrung from the briny sweat of industry, and which seems to have been founded on no other principle, than that "in order to render the people dependent, " we should begin by making them poor."

Without the aid of sophistry, it is easy to demonstrate that all exorbitant impositions, especially on the necessaries of life, have a sure operation to the prejudice of public freedom. Tho' liberty, as Montesquieu observes, gives occasion for excessive taxes, yet excessive taxes in return produce slavery; and it is the effect of slavery to cause a gradual decrease, by which the credit and interest of the nation is lowered, in proportion as its spirit is debased.

Had the people, on these occasions, been industriously exasperated against the administration  
which



which imposed these oppressive duties, the patriot minister might have been rendered as unpopular and detestable as any of his predecessors: And had he continued much longer in power, the people, without a prompter, would have known where to have turned their resentment. But when he was at the height of his popularity, he very prudently retired; and the odium, even of his own oppressions, was artfully transferred to his successor.

Every grievance was imputed to Lord *Bute*, and every indiscretion he committed was aggravated with all the acrimony of malevolent minds bent on disturbing domestic peace and tranquillity. While their industry has been exerted in contriving the most effectual means of distressing the administration, the attention of government, on the other hand, has been necessarily employed in counteracting their artful and malicious endeavours: And thus neither have had leisure to promote any noble and generous plans for national improvement and welfare.

But the people themselves have blindly been accomplices with those who are enemies to their interest. Artful and disappointed men have practised on their passions, and when a flame is once raised, it quickly spreads from one to another: As it was not the power of reason which worked on their minds, but the influence of falsehood and calumny, so when they are once enraged, they do not follow the guidance of reason, but pursue the dictates of resentment.

No

No friend to liberty will deny, but that cases have arisen, and may arise again, in which the regular method of opposition, would prove ineffectual to avert impending evils: Kings have supported ministers and measures, and parliaments have supported them too, to the open violation of national rights. Under such circumstances, when the ordinary methods of obtaining redress fail, recourse must be had to extraordinary remedies. These however should be applied with extreme caution: And there is not at present the least pretence for such irregular and tumultuous applications.

If a bill has passed the legislature, which is found by the public to be prejudicial to their interest, or injurious to their liberty, it is happy, in such instance, that our laws are not like those of the Medes and Persians. The constitution has chalked out a legal method of redress; and it is the privilege of all such as find themselves aggrieved, to instruct their representatives to procure a *repeal* of the obnoxious act.

No one however will presume to say that the petition of a *single* corporate body, and that, as I have observed, not immediately or scarce remotely affected by the act, is sufficient to determine the judgment of the legislature; much less ought it to be influenced by the tumultuous cry of the populace, artfully excited. Civil discord and anarchy must be the result of such unwarrantable and unconstitutional interpositions.

But

But the clamour which still continues to rage against the government, clearly indicates the narrow and selfish designs of those who head the party. Lord *Bute* has yielded to the prejudices of the people against him, and, by a prudent resignation, has consulted the quiet of the kingdom. This sacrifice however will not satisfy the views of his opponents. They seem bent on opposition, whoever is in office ; and would persuade the public that the late minister still directs the affairs of state : Which they will ever pretend, till they are in power themselves ; and all their specious harangues amount to this declaration : “ We will never suffer the government to be at rest, till we can force *ourselves* into power.”

To this end, they have formed a motly heterogeneous junto, composed of associates, who mostly hate or despise each other : Of which the chiefs have been in open opposition to, and have mutually reviled each other, as incapable of government, and as enemies to their country. Thus we are in a miserable situation, too similar to that which Montesquieu describes, in his reflections on the effects resulting from the constitution of *England*.

“ Every individual therein,” says he, “ being  
 “ independent, will follow his own whim and  
 “ caprice, he will frequently shift from one party  
 “ to another, and forsake that in which he  
 “ leaves all his friends, to attach himself to one  
 “ where he meets with all his enemies ; and the

D

“ natives



“ natives of that kingdom will often violate  
 “ both the laws of friendship and those of ha-  
 “ tred.

“ The Sovereign will be in the same situation  
 “ with individuals, and, in opposition to the  
 “ common dictates of prudence, will be obliged  
 “ to repose confidence in those who have offend-  
 “ ed him most, and to disgrace those who have  
 “ served him best, doing that from necessity,  
 “ which other Princes do by choice.

“ The people will be afraid to lose some ima-  
 “ ginary advantage, of the nature of which they  
 “ are ignorant, and which may easily be repre-  
 “ sented to them under various disguises : And  
 “ fear magnifies every object. They will be rest-  
 “ less in their situation, and think themselves  
 “ in danger, in the moments of their greatest  
 “ security.

“ They will be easier deceived, since they  
 “ who oppose the *executive power* with the great-  
 “ est vehemence, *not daring to avow the interest-*  
 “ *ed motives of their opposition*, will attempt to  
 “ *aggravate the terrors of the people*, who will ne-  
 “ *ver be able to judge precisely whether they are in*  
 “ *danger or not.*”

Who will not imagine that Montesquieu was here describing the present cabal ? Who does not smile to hear the advocates of the junto inveigh against the dangerous effects of corruption, when they reflect that some of the foremost in the list, were likewise foremost in extending that corrupt system, which they now affect to condemn ?

Shoud

Should there be some among them however, who never personally stooped to practise the arts of venality, such would do well to consider, that the desire of acquiring power, often corrupts men, as much as the resolution to maintain it. Men will as readily submit to mean drudgery, for the sake of getting a place, as to secure one when gotten.

Corruption as often springs from opposition to power, as from the abuse of power. It is true, the leaders of opposition have neither places nor pensions to bestow on their followers, but they have them in view, and in the mean time they can scatter falsehoods, and disseminate calumnies. Even a *round of dinners*, and vanity of being seated at a splendid table, may corrupt some inconsiderate minds.

Popularity itself, however noble it may sound, has been the instrument of infinite corruption. Whoever misleads the people by false and specious representations, whoever inflames their passions without just cause of resentment, corrupts them as effectually, and more fatally, than he who scatters money amidst the throng. The zeal purchased by gold, will sooner cool, than the misguided rage of passion will subside. The people of *Athens* were as much corrupted by the seditious harangues of their Demagogues, as ever a certain assembly in *England* was by the wealth of the treasury.

There certainly never was a time when the  
language

language of opposition was more daring and inflammatory. During the unhappy times of the civil wars, when the brave patriots of those days opposed the oppressions of government sword in hand, they yet used their pens with discretion; and paid some respect to their Sovereign, and to themselves, by observing a due decorum and dignity in their remonstrances.

But now, not only persons in power, but the very principles of government are attacked with the most flagrant and indecent licentiousness. Nay, Majesty itself is traduced in such audacious terms of insult, as no man could offer to his equal with impunity.

We may venture to affirm that the liberties taken with the speech from the throne, in a late publication, almost exceed the bounds of credibility, as much as they transgress those of order, decency and truth. When *James the second* made a warm answer to an address from the commons, Mr. *Coke*, who seconded the motion for taking the answer into consideration—only added “I hope we are all *Englishmen*, and are not to be frightened out of our duty by a few high Words.” For this expression, the house unanimously stigmatized him as an *incendiary*: And *resolved* that for his indecent and undutiful reflection on the King and the house, he be committed to the *Tower*: And he was committed accordingly.

The brave but discreet patriots of these days did not think they had a right to treat his Majesty's



jeſty's answer, as an answer dictated by the minister. If they expressed such indignation against so comparatively slight a reflection on one of the most arbitrary princes that ever filled the British throne—against a reflection too made *within the house*; where every member has liberty of speech—What would *they* have thought of one, who, *out of the house*, should cast the most infamous aspersions on one of the best of *Sovereigns*, and on *both houses of parliament*?—What would *they* have thought likewise of a noble Lord, who should degrade his quality by appearing publicly in a court of justice, to give countenance to such an offender, as if, by his presence, he meant to encourage and up-hold sedition, in open defiance of his country's laws?

Such writers, together with their patrons and adherents, under the specious mask of being friends, are in truth the most dangerous foes to freedom. By their boundless licentiousness, they afford the only plausible pretext for restraining the most valuable of all rights—the liberty of the press.

But the leaders of the present opposition seem to entertain no other idea of liberty, than the privilege of exercising their own lawless will. They boldly trample on the laws of the land. Even while the cause of their seditious advocate is depending before the judges at Westminster, they appeal from the justice of the court, to the passions of the multitude. They cast inflammatory hand-bills into every house, and distribute  
them

them to every passenger: Which is a most flagrant contempt of the court, and a most atrocious effort to excite civil discord.

If unconstitutional attempts like these must prevail—If turbulent and ambitious spirits who oppose *every change* of administration—who are determined to disturb every government which they do not guide themselves—who would give laws to their Sovereign, and over-rule the legislature—If such men, are suffered to enflame the populace to acts of outrage and sedition, to promote their own interested and licentious purposes—then the boasted constitution of this country, must soon degenerate into an *Ochlocracy*, and there is an end of government.

It is amazing that the people, who have been so often the dupes of credulity, should be still so blind to their interest, as not to perceive, that these men only use them as a ladder, to reach preferment; and that when they have gained the topmost round, they will spurn at them, and requite them, as they have formerly done, for their madness and folly.

Let them peruse the list of the *banqueting jun-*  
to, and see whether there is one, among the chiefs, who, when in office, did not pursue the measures he had before condemned?—Who, soon after his entrance into power, did not hasten to make his peace with the government, by adopting, nay by exceeding, the system of his predecessors?—Let them examine, whether there is one,  
who

who has not concurred in loading them with heavy burthens and oppressions?

It would be happy for the public, if, before it is too late, they could be persuaded that they do themselves a real injury, by espousing the quarrels of party competitors, whose personal contests no more concern public interest, than do the disputes of the Divan. Their shameless and interested opposition would soon cease, if it was not supported by popular prejudice.

While the public continue to add fuel to the flame of party contention, we can never expect to reap the blessings of peace. After having triumphed over our enemies, we shall fall a prey to domestic discord. By our intestine divisions, which perhaps they secretly foment, they will secure those advantages, which they could not acquire by force of arms. The maxim of one of their ablest politicians, will be unhappily exemplified—— “ That by giving us peace, and leaving us to our party broils and contentions, we shall more effectually serve their views, than they can accomplish them by any efforts of their own.”

Amidst this rage of party, what man of honour, spirit, and ability, does not enter into the service of government, with reluctance?—what man, who holds an office upon such uneasy and precarious terms, can compose his mind, and with calm and steady attention, meditate schemes for national relief and improvement?

Under



Under these unfortunate circumstances likewise, who does not feel for a young, virtuous, and benevolent prince, whose amiable disposition inclines him to diffuse happiness among all his subjects; and who is ungratefully distressed by the arts of a lawless opposition; against which he nobly supports himself by his own conscious virtue, and native dignity of mind?

This kingdom seems to be as much in danger from national discord, as from the national debt: And we can never hope to be relieved from the burthen of the latter, or from any other oppression, till we are freed from the grievance of the former.

There will be no end to *personal* opposition, and struggles for power, unless a firm resolution is taken, never to admit any member of a cabal into any department of the administration. We have tried them. We know them. They have trodden those paths, which, they once told us, led to bankruptcy and bondage. When they find, that by enflaming the passions of the multitude, they cannot force themselves into office, they will cease their florid declamations, and seditious writings. By degrees, *their* opposition, which is grafted on *interest*, will be superseded by an opposition founded on *sentiment*—The only one, which can be of service to the public. This will produce a noble competition, who shall best advise for the public welfare. *Measures*, not *men*, will then be the subjects of debate.

Oppo-

Opposition will be confined to its proper office, and to its proper seat.

But perhaps the most effectual method of restoring domestic peace and tranquillity, would be that of discountenancing both parties indiscriminately. Sure the nation is not yet sunk so low, but that there are some honest, independent, moderate *neuters* among us, who have never walked in the trammels of either party. If, among these, our gracious Sovereign should judge it expedient to select some in whom he could repose a confidence, and whom he could entrust with the first posts of government, such an impartial choice might probably contribute to defeat the designs of party, and to reconcile the mistaken and prejudiced public.

This expedient has been formerly practised, and has been attended with salutary effects. When the ridiculous and detestable party-distinctions of *Whig* and *Tory*, were at the highest pitch of enmity and madness: Even then, some upright, able, and moderate *neuters*, such as the noble Earl of *Pembroke*, and others, were called into action, and by their conduct justified the election of their Prince.

Many such doubtless there are now, who are detached from all party-connections, and enjoy philosophic ease in an innocent and unambitious retreat. Such may be discovered by the discernment of our Sovereign, and by his gracious goodness may be encouraged to undertake the

arduous task of quieting the opposition of party, and rectifying the prejudices of the public.

But the people likewise must do their parts; and, by keeping within the line of their duty, be just to themselves. Whenever they transgress the bounds of the constitution, they are guilty of deviations to their own prejudice. There is, in truth, no *opposition* between the *prerogatives* of the crown, and the *privileges* of the people. They are like different movements in one piece of mechanism: And whether one or the other moves irregularly, the machine is equally disordered. It is the privilege of the people, to be governed according to the law of the constitution. The prerogative is part of that law: It was entrusted with the crown, for the benefit of the people; and whenever they invade it, they do injury to their own privileges.

Licentiousness in the people, is as surely subversive of the constitution, as tyranny in the crown. As malice itself cannot impute any unconstitutional attempt to the Sovereign, may the people, from a regard to their own interest, observe the same scrupulous conformity! May they no longer be misled and enflamed by seditious and designing men! May they attend to the dictates of reason! May they adhere to the law of the constitution! And leave the madness of party to vent its impotent rage, unbefriended, unaided, and unpitied.

